



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION



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**MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2006 MEETING OF
THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL**

Chairman Peter Carozza called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. with the following members present: Commissioners Brady, Blashchik, Morris, Nicol, Ouellette, Stankye, Walsh and Wilkinson.

Staff members Lewandowski, Lewis, Morrisette and Piechota were present.

Attendees took a moment to pledge allegiance to the American flag.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Stankye and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2006 meeting. Motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Brady to approve the staff report for the period of January 15, 2006 through February 14, 2006. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4a.) Budget/Staffing Update – Mr. Morrisette reported that within the staff report he had provided a detailed report on the agency's budget. It appears the budget adjustments requested were included in the Governor's proposal. Our meeting with the Regulation and Protection Subcommittee previously scheduled for last Friday has been rescheduled for this Thursday afternoon. He said that's when we'll have an opportunity to meet with specific members of the Appropriations Committee with cognizance over our agency to discuss, in more detail, the agency's budget. He also said the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) had requested he prepare a report as it relates to consideration of reinstatement of the Limited Access Highway (LAH) program. This action would necessitate legislative action because the original enabling legislation was repealed. This will probably be a topic of discussion at Thursday's meeting.

Mr. Morrisette also reported that the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) has nominated to the Governor a replacement for Commissioner Kip Brammer. Mr. Philip Schenck, Town Manager of Avon has been nominated. Mr. Schenck is familiar to our agency in that he had previously participated along with Ed Amatrudo in teaching the Promotional Interviews program.

Commissioner Nicol asked if there is a Bill regarding the LAH program.

Mr. Morrisette replied no, not at this time.

Moving to item 4b.) CSFA Education Committee Update – Commissioner Wilkinson reported that the Education Committee met on February 23rd. The Governor’s mid-term budget includes the money being sought to facilitate the lease between Bradley Airport and the Commission for the expansion at the Academy. There is also an additional \$10 million in bonding the Governor has proposed in her budget for the overall project. There wasn’t a Bond Commission meeting this month however our sources at Department of Public Works (DPW) feel confident that there will be one in March and we should be on that agenda. He said the letter writing campaign to the Governor and selected legislators should continue in the interim. The other land acquisition initiatives are going well. He said to quote Don Ouillette from DPW, “there’s been more happening on this project in the last three weeks than there has been in the last two and a half years”, so we remain very optimistic at this point that we’ll get shovel in the ground sometime soon. Mr. Ouillette has recalculated the figures and believes that DPW can easily spend \$17 million by FY07 once we get the projects up and running. One of the things that have been discussed with legislators is the operational funding needs for the Regional Fire Schools. That money has been buried in the Comptroller’s budget for a long time. A meeting with legislators was held at the Capitol and they strongly suggested, because the Regional School budgets are buried so deeply in the Comptroller’s budget that may have a lot to do with why the request for increased funding over the years didn’t go anywhere. Basically no agency was advocating on behalf of the funding requests. They suggested that the Regional Fire Schools consider the possibility of moving their operational funding from the Comptroller’s budget to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control’s budget. Most importantly, it was felt that it would be more visible within the Commission’s budget in addition to a greater opportunity for advocates for the Regional Fire Schools to communicate their needs at the various hearings. The Regional Fire Schools did a poll and there was overwhelming support to ask that the funding be transferred to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control which the legislators said they feel they could do without the need for legislation. He said, based on that poll, he went to the CSFA Executive Board meeting and expressed the Regional Fire Schools issue and the Executive Board voted unanimously to support moving that funding from the Comptroller’s budget to the Commission’s budget with the stipulation that it continue as a pass through account and that the reporting process would continue to go through the treasurer of the CSFA who happens to be Commissioner Stankye. The next meeting is scheduled for March 23rd in Wethersfield.

Mr. Morrisette reported specifically as it relates to the lease agreement for Bradley. He said we’ve been waiting for approval by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to sign the initial agreement which in essence is only a letter of understanding to provide DPW access to the land for some preliminary surveying, wet land delineation and possible test borings. The agreement letter has been held up as the lawyer from OPM who is reviewing the document has been on vacation. He had some initial concerns that if something happened and the funding wasn’t in place, it could be a problem for the agency. Possibly by week’s end we may have some indication regarding their approval to move forward.

Commissioner Brady said that it is his understanding \$10 million has been appropriated so far and asked if that was correct and whether this would require an additional appropriation from the legislature.

Commissioner Wilkinson replied yes that is correct and the Governor has included an additional \$10 million in her budget for this coming year.

Moving to item 4c.) Service Voucher Update – Mr. Morrissette reported that an additional seven fire companies responded as to how they wish to obtain this year's funding. Thus far we have 70 fire companies selecting vouchers and 72 direct payments. The payment requests have been processed by our Business Office so the checks are either in hand or in the mail. He said his biggest concern is the fire companies that have not yet responded and also the 70 fire companies that selected to receive vouchers. He asked Commission members to encourage those companies to commit their funding for a specific program or identify how they want to spend the funds because we need to clean up the books by the end of May or early June.

Commissioner Ouellette asked for a list of companies that have not yet responded.

Mr. Morrissette replied that the Executive Secretary can provide the list at the end of the meeting.

Moving to item 4d.) National Certification Registration Options – Mr. Morrissette stated that Commissioner Kowalski had requested that this be placed back on the agenda as he had some points of view he wanted to share. Unfortunately, he is not in attendance at today's meeting so we would like to table this item until next month.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Blashchik to table this item until the next Commission meeting. Motion carried.

Moving to item 4e.) New London County IMT Recognition – Chairman Carozza stated that he's had a brief discussion with Chief Nick DeLia, City of Groton about this issue and they are planning to schedule a meeting within the next month, before the next Commission meeting. He said members are welcome to attend and he'll let the State Fire Administrator know when the meeting is scheduled. He asked if there were no objections we would table this item for next month's meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Ouellette to table this item for the next meeting. Motion carried.

Mr. Morrissette also stated for the Commission's information that DEMHS has established a Subcommittee of the Homeland Security Coordinating Council to review the issue of Incident Management Teams (IMT). He said the Chairman of that Committee is Jim Mona from the DOT and they've had two meetings in the last few

weeks. Therefore, there will be more information forthcoming and as minutes from those meetings become available he'll have the Executive Secretary forward them to members to keep abreast of the activities. He said he believes it was DEMHS' intention to look at establishing five IMT's within Connecticut.

Moving to item 5a.) Legislative Update – Mr. Morrissette stated that we had distributed a legislative Bill tracking chart with the packages and an updated chart is also available today. He said he wanted to provide members an opportunity to review the proposed legislation to date and if there were questions to try and answer them. He also said if Commissioner's would like the full text of any Bill to let him know and we can provide that at the end of today's meeting. He reminded members that this is the short session and the initial public hearings were held about a week or so ago for at least the Public Safety Committee. He said the only one we specifically testified on was the Fire Service Training Bill which renews a legislative taskforce to look at the issue of training.

Moving to item 5b.) Unexcused Examination Absence Procedure – Director of Certification Piechota stated that we've never had a procedure in place for examination no shows and we felt the need to create a policy that defines the process to be used by the Certification Division when a candidate for certification is absent from an examination without being excused. This will allow everyone to know what the ramifications are if they don't show up for an exam without calling. He said there is an ability to be excused if you reschedule. He distributed a copy of the Unexcused Examination Absence Procedure which states that the candidate shall forfeit any examination application fee. The candidate's examination application shall be returned to the applicant. The candidate shall be required to reapply for an examination at a later date using the normal application process.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Ouellette and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to approved the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control Certification Unexcused Examination Absence Procedure. Motion carried.

Moving to item 5c.) Certification Challenge Clarification – Mr. Piechota referenced a document called Certification Examination Challenge Procedure Clarification. He said on the second page is the Certification Eligibility Policy the Commission approved approximately six months ago in which it laid out where training leading to certification can take place, so persons can get training in certain places to be certified as FFI, FFII or Pump Operator, etc. or take courses offered by the Fire Academy to be certified to some other levels. He said on the back there was a provision that allowed the Commission to extend permission to persons to challenge exams if they are able to prove to the Commission that they've had equivalent training some place else. After examining the document internally, we felt a need to clarify the language on the challenge piece. He referenced the revised language in bold italics which states that persons can petition the Commission to challenge an examination based on equivalent training that is now formal education such as a college or university, or National Fire Academy so we've now narrowed it down. He said if a person has training that addresses a level by any of those entities or institutions then we could grant the person permission to challenge. We are

also allowing persons who are Emergency Medical Service Instructors (EMS-I) or Municipal Policy Academy (POST) Instructors who have gone through a Methods of Instruction course that is equivalent to our Fire Instructor I assuming they still meet the other prerequisites. He said this is really a clarification of language and he's not sure a motion is required.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Stankye to support the recommendation to clarify the language in the Certification Examination Challenge Procedure. Motion carried.

Moving to item 6- Comments from the public- There was none.

Moving to item 7 – Matters to be raised by Commissioners and staff - Commissioner Nicol mentioned about the possibility of holding our next meeting at the Capitol.

Mr. Morrissette remarked that timing is important in trying to gain visibility and either March or April would be fine if space is available.

Chairman Carozza added that he supports the idea and we could even look at holding the April 25th meeting at the Capitol.

Mr. Morrissette added that we tentatively have Friday, April 28th scheduled for Fire Service Day at the Capitol which is also Worker Memorial Day.

Commissioner Nicol added that we have a couple of Commissioners like Ed Haber and Kim Brammer that we traditionally would recognize when we meet at the Capitol and we haven't done that in a while.

Commissioner Nicol also mentioned that the CFDIA is scheduled to meet tomorrow and Commissioner Brady is hosting the meeting at his place of employment Honeywell Fire Systems in North Branford. He said if anyone is interested in attending and visiting the plant the meeting begins at 9:00 am and there are open seats still available.

Commissioner Ouellette stated that the letter writing campaign to the Governor for the Regional Fire Schools funding seems to be working and made a recommendation that all members take this back to their respective organizations and encourage that letters continue to be sent. He said he plans to have copies available at the Instructor's meeting tomorrow.

Commissioner Stankye added that he concurs with Commissioner Ouellette and the letters are being acknowledged so we should keep the letter writing campaign ongoing.

Mr. Lewandowski stated relative to the New London County IMT recognition that a few staff members here at the Academy, both full and part-time, saw this as an agenda item and not knowing what DEMHS is going to do as far as establishing those teams felt that the Fire Academy and the Commission should be involved as things move forward from

the standpoint that we have qualified personnel that have expertise in that area. He said it is something to look at because a lot of times other agencies are taking emergency response work from the Fire Service and if this moves forward we need to have a voice in there and there are training opportunities involved.

Commissioner Morris said he wanted to add to that as a positive and stated that one of the things they do at their monthly IMT meeting is ensure that they conduct training at the end of the exercise so he thinks that being on each of those Committees would bring a lot to the table.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that he had made a proposal at the first IMT Subcommittee meeting, that DEMHS may want to look at state agencies because in most events the local first responders are going to be committed either on a local, regional or state level. Therefore, the next round of available personnel would probably be state agency or federal agency personnel.

Mr. Piechota said that as the Commission is aware, the Certification standards that we base our examinations on are adopted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and those standards are revised on a five year cycle. He said we have reviewed the proposed changes to NFPA 472 which is the Hazardous Materials (Haz Mat) standard. There are some significant changes in the proposal to be adopted in 2007. They are changing the standard to include Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) as well as traditional Haz Mat. He said the biggest thing he wanted the Commission to be aware of is they have now proposed to add nine new levels of Haz Mat Operations so they are going from one Operational level to nine new ones. He distributed a copy of NFPA Operations Level Responders Definitions page and indicated that paragraphs 3.4.1 through 3.4.10 are the nine new levels being proposed. He said the Commission should keep this in mind because Haz Mat Operations is required by CONN OSHA and Haz Mat Operations is required by NFPA 1000 for the purposes of FFII now, so to add nine levels on the surface could appear confusing from a standardization standpoint. He said in speaking to the NFPA liaison who oversees this it's not as bad as it appears. They're still retaining the Haz Mat core competencies which are the same as we currently have today. These nine new levels are above and beyond that. He said the staff liaison at the NFPA has assured him that he would bring any comments we have directly to the Technical Committee. He said he intends to express our desire to the Committee to be sure that they are very specific, that everyone who's been offered the Operations level be required to be trained to the CORE and the remaining nine levels are just above and beyond. He said the liaison assures him that that is not the intent of the Committee either. He also said the State Fire Administrator suggested that we meet with CONN OSHA because they require Fire Service personnel to meet certain levels of competency.

Commissioner Morris asked if we could post this on the list serv.

Mr. Piechota said he would get a list serv out with a short summary of these changes with an actual link to the NFPA document so that we don't run into a problem with the NFPA legal people.

Commissioner Ouellette added that he would be very cautious that these proposals don't lead to any mandated changes in the future. He said a lot of the Fire Chiefs would be concerned with that and we don't want to complicate the issues.

Commissioner Brady asked when is the change in the standard expected to take place.

Mr. Piechota replied probably in the spring or early summer of 2007.

A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Morrisette reported that Russ Emons has formally retired as the agency's Program Coordinator for Public Education effective yesterday. Alan Zygmunt has been promoted to fill his slot. Mr. Emons will stay on to do some selective teaching in areas of interest. He said he met with Mr. Emons yesterday who thanked the agency and the Commission for their support and it was a great ride while he was here. Alan Zygmunt who is with the Southington Fire Department will be the new Program Coordinator responsible for Public Education.

Mr. Morrisette also reported that Pam Cooney in the Bookstore reported that as of yesterday the Bookstore has had record sales for the month of February, approaching \$28,000. He said he's not quite sure what's driving the sales but she's very pleased in terms of the level of activity in that area.

He also reported that the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunity (CHRO) is amending their Regulation specifically as it relates to state agencies filing affirmative action plans and a schedule for those filings. We have been exempt up to this point however, they've added the Commission to the filing schedule and there is a public hearing scheduled for March 21st if anyone is interested in attending. He said it would now be the responsibility of DAS to develop the agency's plan and make the necessary filings for our agency which would be every two years.

Commissioner Nicol inquired how things were going in the Business Office.

Mr. Morrisette remarked that the support on the Human Resource side seems to be good. They've actually established some office hours on a weekly basis which has been helpful. He said there are still some loose ends on the fiscal side and a lot of frustration within our Business office so we're trying to schedule a meeting with the head financial person to tie up the loose ends. He said he'll be on vacation next week and had requested to meet before he leaves because there are a lot of little issues. The other big area of concern is inventory and the end of year reports that have to be completed.

Commissioner Ouellette expressed his regrets that Russ Emons is leaving the Public Education program as he's done an outstanding job and wanted it relayed that the Commission feels his departure will be a loss to the agency.

Mr. Morrisette mentioned that Jim Carroll's brother in-law passed away. You may be aware that Jim's wife Pat assists in the Bookstore.

A **MOTION** was made by Commissioner Wilkinson and **SECONDED** by Commissioner Walsh to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Chairman Carozza adjourned the meeting at 10:25 am.

Dated:

James P. Wilkinson, Secretary
Commission on Fire Prevention and Control